

News Release



U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
USDL 03-391

For Immediate Release
Date: Mon., July 21, 2003
Contact: Gloria Della
Phone: (202) 693-8664

New Labor Department Web Site Can Help Millions Find Valuable Information On Health Benefits

WASHINGTON--The U. S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) today announced the launch of a new interactive Web site that will serve as a resource to help employees and their families make informed decisions about their health benefits when facing life and work changes.

Assistant Secretary of Labor Ann L. Combs called the Web site, "an outstanding resource for the 131 million Americans and their families who rely on coverage from private-sector group health plans. It will be especially helpful when unanticipated events happen."

The Web site gives consumers information about

- Health coverage under private plans and federal and state programs
- Definitions of key terms
- Links to other resources, including public health plans and state insurance offices nationwide.

The new Web site, which can be found at www.dol.gov/elaws/health, asks employees questions, guiding them through easy-to-use helpful tools and facts about health benefits. Visitors to the site will learn the specific requirements and rights under laws like the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). More importantly, the Web site allows the public to obtain information about their rights and responsibilities under a group health plan upon the occurrence of specific life and work changes -- including marriage, childbirth, death, divorce, job loss, new job, or retirement.

EBSA is an agency within the Labor Department that oversees nearly 2.6 million health benefit plans nationwide. As part of its ongoing Health Benefits Education Campaign, the agency conducts education and outreach about health benefit issues in order to explain the rights and responsibilities associated with coverage by a group health plan. Other free publications under the campaign are available on EBSA's Web site or by calling toll-free 1-866-444-EBSA (3272).

This Employment Law Advisor is one of a series of elaws advisors (Employment Laws Assistance for Workers and Small Businesses), which are interactive e-tools that help individuals understand federal employment laws, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).